

## [Pioneer Reminiscences]

W1221

Beliefs & Customs-Folk[?]

Accession no. W1221

Date received 10/10/4[2?]

Consignment no. 1

Shipped from Wash. off.

Label

Amount 14p.

WPA. L. C. PROJECT Writers' UNIT

Form[md]3 Folklore Collection (or Type)

Title Pioneer reminiscences [Umipque?] Academy-early school of teaching

Place of origin Portland Oregon Date 2/22/39

Project worker Sara B. Wrenn

Project editor

Remarks L

Form A

## Library of Congress

Circumstances of Interview

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration [Reminence?]

OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

Name of worker Sara B. Wrenn Date February 22, 1939

Address 505 Elks Building, Portland, Oregon

Subject Pioneer reminiscences - Umpqua Academy - Early school teaching

Name and address of informant Mrs. Hortense Applegate 1154 S.E. 34th Ave., Portland, Oregon.

Date and time of [interview?] February 21, 1939; 1:30 to 2:45 P.M.

Place of interview Above address, home of daughter, Mrs. Beatrice Brewer.

Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant

Miss Villa Camden, of ex-Mayor Geo. L. Baker's office, Corbett, Bldg.

Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you —

Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

Living-room, comfortably but "clutteredly" furnished, with a little of everything in it. Old house, of six or seven rooms, two-story, high-ceilinged, and somewhat in need of paint on the outside. Corner lot, unfenced and unenclosed, with a few fruit trees, somewhat

## Library of Congress

neglected in appearance. A neighborhood of old houses, most of them in not-too-good condition, with a few shops of mediocre types.

Form B

Personal History of Informant

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration

OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

Name of worker Sara B. Wrenn Date February 22, 1939

Address 505 Elks Building, Portland, Oregon.

Subject Pioneer reminiscences - Umpqua Academy - Early school teaching

Name and address of informant Mrs. Hortense Applegate 1134 S. E. 34th Ave., Portland, Oregon.

Information obtained should supply the following facts:

1. Ancestry
2. Place and date of birth
3. Family
4. Places lived in, with dates
5. Education, with dates

## Library of Congress

6. Occupations and accomplishments with dates

7. Special skills and interests

8. Community and religious activities

9. Description of informant

10. Other points gained in interview

1. English.

2. Winchester, Douglas County, Oregon; Born May 2, 1854.

3. Dr. Calvin Reed, father; Elvira Brown, mother. 3 sons: Audley, Homer, James; 4 daughters: Mrs. Agnes King, Mrs. Harriett Buckley, Mrs. Vivian Hunt, Mrs. Beatrice Brewer.

4. Born and lived in Oregon until 1887; California, 1887-1903; Oregon 1903 to date.

5. Umpqua Academy, at Wilbur, Oregon.

6. Teacher in private and public schools until marriage; housewife thereafter.

7. Housekeeping. Interested in politics, with particular reference to Townsend bill.

8. Rebecca Lodge; Townsend Club; Methodist Church.

9. Small, slight woman, with white hair and plenty of it. Blue eyes, and extremely keen of intellect. Well-dressed and neat in appearance.

10. An old lady, who "keeps up" with everything.

## Library of Congress

Form C

Text of Interview (Unedited)

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration

OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

Name of worker Sara B. Wrenn Date February 22, 1939

Address 505 Elks Building, Portland, Oregon.

Subject Pioneer Reminiscences - Umpqua Academy - Early school teaching. Poetry - Songs

Name and address of informant Mrs. Hortense Applegate 1134 S. E. 34th Ave., Portland, Oregon.

Text:

I'm going to give you my life story from this retrospect — as I call it — that I have written, and first I think I'll give you some of my background. I never knew my father, as I was only a few months old at his death, and my mother died when I was a very small girl.

My father, Dr. Calvin Reed, with his family, left the State of Iowa, crossing the plains in Oregon, in 1850. His train of immigrants included a hundred families, together with a number of single men. He first settled in the Willamette Valley, spending the winter of 1850-'51, at Clackamas, near Oswego, and from there moving to Milwaukie. Later, finding the climate of Southern Oregon more congenial, he moved to the smalltown of Winchester, on the North Umpqua River. That was where I was born, as I have already told you.

## Library of Congress

Father bought an old grist mill from a man by the name of Nelson Brebant, together with 320 acres of land, and in addition filed on a donation land claim of 320 acres, so that he had in all 640 acres. He repaired the mill with burrs he brought across the Plains. All the furniture was of 2 his handiwork. The bedsteads, tables and chairs he made were in use long after I was grown. They were nice enough for any ordinary home and, but for a fire in which they were destroyed, would probably still be in use.

After the death of my father, mother bought a small farm near the town of Wilbur and, with her family, moved there, so that my older brothers and sisters might be educated. My memory holds a beautiful picture from the long ago. The home, not a mansion, was a plain one-story house, of kitchen, bedroom and living room, with a porch facing the northeast, so that we could see the sunrise. The house stood on a knoll, surrounded by fields. Below the house, to the east, was the barn and cow shed, with just a short distance away a grove of poplar trees, the leaves of which — all the colors of the rainbow at times, quivered and seemed to sing with every wind that blew. Those poplar trees gave me my first impression of the loveliness of autumn, a loveliness that still charms me and takes me back in memory to that simple home and my mother.

I don't remember that my mother was ever cross. There was a cut-off over the hill and through the moods that we called the Gap. My mother used to take me by the hand and lead me through the Gap to church on Sunday. It was a path I loved. I thrilled to the trees and flowers along the way. I used to play alone, picking buttercups and little toadstools, and setting them up — making little men and women out of them.

In 1862 the picture changed. Our mother was taken and the family separated, no more to gather around the home fireside. A guardian was appointed over the four youngest children, one sister, two brothers and myself. We went to our older sister's home [md] a public place known as the Wilbur House. We were all sent to school, but in a few years

## Library of Congress

were scattered. My brothers drifted off first. My sisters married. I was the last to stay. I never knew my oldest 3 brothers, Oscar, Nelson and Madison, until after middle life.

I was reared and educated at the Umpqua Academy, under the Methodist missionaries and pioneers by whom it was inaugurated. The Umpqua Academy was located at Wilbur, Douglas County, Oregon. It was chartered by the Oregon Territorial legislature on January 15, 1857, but a school, bearing the same name, was previously taught in the same locality [md] a shadow of coming events. The Reverend James H. Wilbur was the founder and author of the events that led to the establishment and splendid career of the school, and Father Wilbur, as he was called, had active supporters in men of ability to help put his plan into operation.

The first teacher, I remember was James Stork. According to the records, he taught the primary department, under Professor Arnold. The Reverend T. F. Royal was the succeeding principal, from 1859 to 1867....He watched over his flock as the proverbial hen "gathers her brood under her wing." .....Every morning our school opened with prayer and singing. This is one song I remember: "I saw a little blade of grass Just peeping from the sod. I asked it why it sought to pass Beyond its present clod. It answered, as it raised its head, All sparkling fresh with dew: 'I rise, I rise to seek the Light'"

The memory of those school days brings to mind the bell, that through the years rang out its clarion call.... It talked morning, noon and night, as it hung in the open space at the top of the building. It could be heard throughout the whole village, calling us to our tasks. On Sunday it reminded us to respect this as a day of rest, calling us to the chapel to worship. In sadness it told us of some sorrow in our midst, tolling out the number of years of the departed, a custom at that time, but now long since discarded.... I quote an ode to the bell, written 21 years ago by George [Dimic?], a student of the Umpqua Academy, and read 4 at one of the gatherings or homecomings: "Half a century has fled Since first I heard that bell's sweet tongue, But never in these many years Did its music seem to inspire my soul

## Library of Congress

As it did this morn, when at dawn it rung. It seemed in that old sweet way to say, 'Come - come - come, answer the roll'"

The last of the Academy teachers was Professor A. J. Garland, in 1887. The work heretofore done by the academies of the State was superseded by the public schools. The church had fulfilled its mission in educational work of that nature. In 1888, on June 30th, it was voted to lease the Umpqua Academy promises to the public school district for ten years, for \$500, the rental to be applied to improvement of the building and grounds. In 1900 a resolution was adopted to sell the premises to the district for \$400. There the records of the old academy close....

Of the years of the Civil War there is much that I recall, though I was a little girl, too small to take part in the exhibitions, as they were called. But how excited I would be when they put them one.... We were for the Union. The songs we sang were all patriotic. My niece Mary Hill, or Mollie, as we called her, but two years younger than I, was a little songbird. She learned all the popular songs of the day and was ready to sing on any occasion. Dixie Land was one of her favorites. She earned the pet name of "Dixie" by this song. Other songs that were sung in school entertainments were "When Johnny comes marching home again," "On the field of battle, mother."

The assassination of President Lincoln was a great sorrow. I was too young to understand its meaning, but years after, when I met my schoolmates we talked of how deeply the students of all ages were impressed. The news came in the afternoon. It spread like fire, and in a short time everybody knew. The 5 students held a memorial meeting that evening, for which preparations were hurriedly made. George Kuykendall, one of the older students, concluded to write something in the same meter and style as a dirge the students had been singing. I remember only the first verse: "Murdered by a southern traitor While his friends were near his side. Asking God to save his country, Lincoln for the Union died. Rest! Lincoln, Rest!"



## Library of Congress

As they sang there was sobbing all over the room....Such was the love and reverence for our president.

My brother-in-law, F. R. Hill, was an enthusiastic supporter of the Union, as was my sister, Delinda. They were both anxious for news, as the war progressed, news that was carried over the telegraph. My brother-in-law had a bulletin board in front of his hotel, upon which he printed the news with chalk as it came in. To make good news more impressive, he, with others, took a piece of iron piping, carried it to a hill, set it on a foundation, filled it with powder, and fired it off. The report could be heard miles away. As far distant as Roseburg, eight miles, the people would yell, "Hurrah for Flem Hill!!! I cannot recall just what the news was about, but anyway they filled their pipe too full of powder, and it burst... Mr. Hill had a wonderful voice, clear as a bell. He led the singing in church, and his voice could be heard above all the rest. He would put a locust leaf between his lips and make beautiful music.

Going back to my schooling, Mr. Clark Smith, former assistant under Professor Royal, succeeded to the principalship for 1867-68. He taught one year and was succeeded by Prof. J. H. Herron. I, with a number of other students, applied for a certificate to teach, as many districts were calling for school teachers.

John Booth was county school superintendent. I applied for the Ten Mile 6 Valley school, south of Roseburg. School teachers at the time received only \$30 a month and boarded with the scholars.

I was young and just out of school, and was sure at home among my scholars, though I had several girls in the school of my own age. The three months went by quickly. There were two schools in the valley, North and South Ten Mile. A Miss Vandeburg taught the south school. Returning home to Wilbur, after the close of school I visited a sister, Mrs. John Imbler, living near Roseburg. While there I met Mrs. Tom Brown. Her husband ran a ferry across the South Umpqua, near Roseburg. Both she and her husband were pioneers of 1847. Mrs. Brown was a woman of intellect and fair education, and wanted a school in

## Library of Congress

the neighborhood for her four children. She asked if I would teach a three months' school there, if she could get enough scholars at \$5.00 each to pay me for the period. I took up her proposition.

The first day she harnessed up her horses to the light spring wagon, and started out, taking the prospective teacher....Some were pleased; others wanted to think it over. Some of them appeared to think we were trying to "put something over" on them. Mrs. [ ??] a big, red-haired woman, was eating her dinner. As Mrs. Brown talked, this woman bit viciously at her knife as she ate. I thought to myself, "she is opposed to school; she will never send her children." And she never did...[ .?] Finally Mrs. Brown had twelve on the list, with others promising to send their children. She felt they would be true to their word, and I commenced the school. I taught six weeks. No more scholars came. One morning Mrs. Brown told me that if I didn't feel like continuing to teach so small a number, to discontinue and she would pay me for my time, telling me to so advise the children that day, and she would take me to the bank at Roseburg, the next day.

7

She was true to her word. She was the mother of George M. Brown, who was elected to Oregon's Supreme Court bench in 1920.

I returned to school in 1869. Professor Deardorf was the principal. My next school was in Coos County, at Myrtle Point, in 1870....Coos County was my first and only school out of Douglas County. Coos County seemed a long way off and quite an adventure. The roads we had were bad....I recall many recollections as a little girl of the old stage coach, when I lived at my sister's home on the main county road. This was a stopping place, the post office being at this point, in the small town of Wilbur. I remember watching the big stage come in, its four horses plunging under the driver's lash, as they pulled the coach through mud and slush sometimes up to the hubs in winter. The stage driver would snatch a bite to eat and a cup of hot coffee, and then on to the next stop, ten miles distant, where horses and drivers changed....

## Library of Congress

In the spring of 1870 I started on horseback with my brother Dwight, to Myrtle Point, in Coos County. Leaving the village of Wilbur early in the morning, we travelled as far as Camas Prairie, where we stopped for the night. This was the end of what could be called a road, and thence we took the mountain trail to the coast. My brother was in the lead. The trail was narrow, and in places rocky and steep. I kept my saddle, though at times it seemed straight up and down. A more tired girl could hardly be found when we arrived at Myrtle Point the next forenoon. Why the name Myrtle Point I soon learned. We approached through a grove of dark green trees, so dense the way grew dark. Such magnificent trees and sweet odors from the heavy, leafy foliage I can never forget.

The next business was to prepare for the opening of school. First I had to take my examination, and to do that I was obliged to go to Empire City, down the 8 Coquille River and across Coos Bay. My brother Oscar's farm was on the river. He had his own boat, as he frequently made trips for trading purposes. Arriving at Coos Bay Landing, which took most all day, we boarded the steamer and went across to Empire City. There I had the examination, received my certificate, and returned to my work.

The schoolhouse stood on a raise in wooded surroundings. The many beautiful shrubs and flowers presenting a rural attractiveness. Monday morning found me at my post of duty, with almost every pupil of school age in the district, promptly an hand....[After?] two weeks of school I came down with the measles... I had taught two days, feeling badly and not knowing the trouble. It was customary in those times for the teachers to board with the scholars. As I kept getting worse I sent for my brother, Oscar. He took a good look at me and remarked, "Why, Tensa, you have the measles." The eruptions were plain to be seen on my chest, but I could not be convinced that was what I had. My brother asked if I could ride, proposing to take me home with him. "But what about you and the family, taking me there with measles?" I asked. "We'll have to take our chances," he replied, as he wrapped me in a big overcoat, after I'd put on my warmest outfit. Then he put me on a horse, while he took the lead on another. In many places of the narrow trail the overhanging limbs had

## Library of Congress

to be dodged. My back and neck ached with pain, when I went to bed at his home. In a week or ten days I was back at school, and nothing further interrupted.... Returning from the three months' school at Myrtle Point, I applied for the primary department in the public school at Roseburg, and that winter taught under Professor Rice. The next spring I taught at Scotts Valley, Douglas County.

A Miss Harrar, from Portland, had applied for the school. She was a niece of Mrs. Letsom. J. H. Todd was the school superintendent at Wilbur, where she went to get her certificate. She failed to pass and came back quite [crest-fallen?]. A young man of Yoncalla met her, to take her to Scotts Valley. It seems the superintendent, to whom she applied for her certificate, was a red-haired man. Irrked and disappointed, she blamed the red-headed superintendent for her failure. "I always did hate red-headed men" she told the young man, who, unfortunately, was red-headed too. He took the thrust good-naturedly, with the private decision, "I'll take no more schoolmarms home, if that's their opinion of red-headed men." When I arrived at Yoncalla, who should meet me at the depot but this same young man. I thought him nice and gentlemanly, and I always thought myself a good judge of gentlemen.

I had never visited this part of the county (Douglas) before. It was a beautiful valley, surrounded by low, undulating hills, covered by pine, maple, cedar, and dogwood, with various other kinds of trees and shrubs of many blooming varieties. There were fine farms and fertile fields. In the four busy months of my school, from April 1st to and including July, I met many fine people, among them pioneers of 1843. The first settlers in the valley were the Cowan brothers, Robert and Tom. Robert had a family. The brother was single. Shortly after came the three Applegate brothers, Jesse, Charles and Lindsay. Their names have gone down in Oregon history for their statesmanship, and their unbounded hospitality and helpfulness to the early missionaries and immigrants to the State.

In all localities you find odd and rather eccentric people. A few cases of smallpox had broken out at Oakland, some ten miles away. The next morning after the news, a number

## Library of Congress

of the scholars came to school with [assafoetida?] tied around their necks. Occasionally they chewed it, making the atmosphere of the room very unpleasant. I proceeded to remove the wads from their necks, Ella Adams, quite a large girl, objected strenuously, but I succeeded, with the promise to return it 10 after school.

This school ended my days of teaching..... I married the young man of red hair, who had met me at the depot three years before. Forty-six years we travelled down life's trail together. The call came to him at 74 years of age, in 1921.

---

You ask me about some of the household customs of the early years. There were so many, so different from today. I recall particularly the moulding of candles, because my eldest sister, with whom I lived, had a hotel, requiring many lights of course, so the task of keeping candles was somewhat arduous. Being small, my part of the job was to insert the cotton wicking in the moulds, with a loop at the top, through which a stick was run. When the melted mutton tallow and beeswax composition was poured in, and had hardened, the completed candles were lifted out by this stick through the loops.

Something else, quite different from today, with all our commercially canned fruits and vegetables, that can scarcely be told from the freshly-picked, was the fruit —wild gooseberries, strawberries and currants— that were cooked and then poured into bottles, just any kind of bottles, into which the corks were thrust and red sealing wax poured over them. No sugar was put in this fruit. Then, of course, there was much drying of both fruits and vegetables. Nothing tastes much better than dried corn, after being soaked all night and then cooked.

---

Form D

## Library of Congress

Extra Comment

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration

OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

Name of worker Sara B. Wrenn Date February 22, 1939

Address 505 Elks Building, Portland, Oregon.

Subject Pioneer reminiscences [md] Umpqua Academy [md] Early school teaching.

Name and address of informant Mrs. Hortense Applegate. 1134 S. E. 34th Ave., Portland, Oregon.

Comment:

The interviewer is somewhat disappointed at the lack of folklore obtained from Mrs. Applegate, who is the widow of Charles Applegate, of Oregon's wellknown Applegate family. The information given was taken largely from a manuscript prepared by Mrs. Applegate, to which she referred in her interview. The old love poem (attached) was lent to the interviewer for copying.

Mrs. Applegate, and the daughter with whom she lives, Mrs. Beatrice Brewer, were both extremely interested and enthusiastic over the work of the project, cooperating in every way, even to the extent of conducting the interviewer to see a friend, several blocks distant, who is scheduled for an interview later.

Attached is an auction bill of sale.

## Library of Congress

(Editor's note. Copies of two poems, "Verses Written to a Rejected Suitor," and "The Pioneers of '43," given to the interviewer by the informant, have been transferred to the "Folk Songs and Folk Rhymes" file.)

### COPY OF AN AUCTION BILL OF SALE 1856

Charles Applegate

Bought of the Estate of John L. Mulkey, January 30th, 1856

1 Ax \$ .37 1/2

1 Mare (pony) 95.00

1 Horse (Black) 66.00

1 Yearling Colt (Dinah's) 35.00

1 2 yr. old " (Dinah's) 47.00

1 Mare (Dinah's fully) 55.00

1 Yoke Oxen 140.00

1 " " 142.00

1 " " 140.00 650.37 1/2

1 Steer deduct 70.00 \$650.37 1/2